

**true**  
a BBN agency



# HOW SHORT-TERM SALES LED TO LONG-TERM BRAND VALUE

**Multi-channel Lead Gen, Large enterprise**

Company name: **Micro Focus**

Brand: **Visual COBOL**

URL or microsite:

**<http://bit.ly/2mN1mkl>**



---

# SUMMARY

The holy grail of B2B marketing is to unite sales with brand building for long-term business stability.

We believe this case study, conducted over 3 years, is a game-changer for B2B marketing. We were able to demonstrate how a balanced programme was able to achieve both short-term sales objectives, whilst building brand value that contributed consistent sales over the long-term.

Furthermore, this case study demonstrates the way long-term effects, generated by the campaign, were fundamentally different from how the short-term effects were produced. And how long-term effects are not simply an accumulation of short-term campaign results.

In other words, we show how the sales achieved by executing a succession of short-term response-focused campaigns added up to more than the total of direct marketing sales over the long-term. And how brand-response campaigns achieve year-on-year improvement to business success.

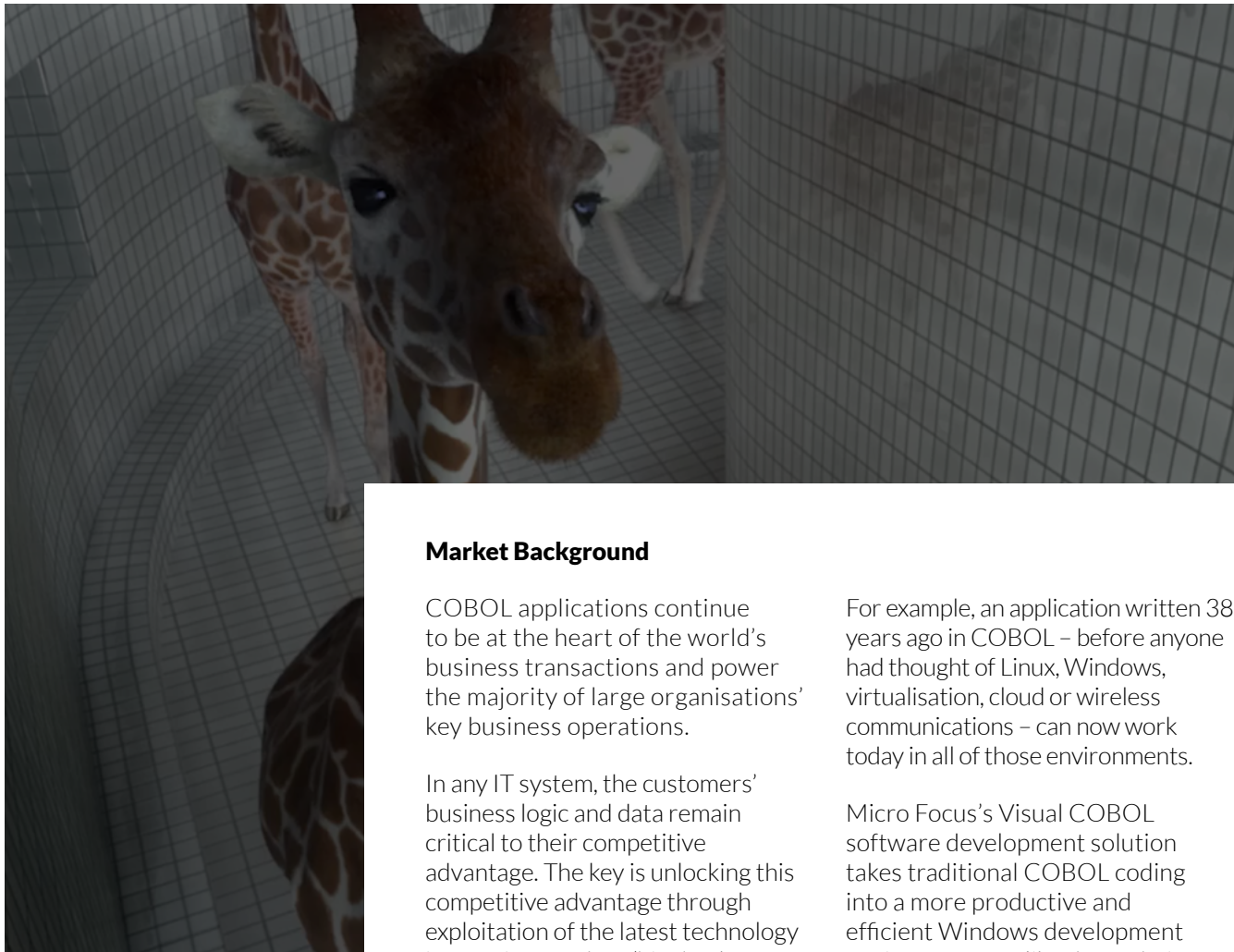
We'll also show how an emotional message, developed as a 'big long idea' generated powerful 'sticky' memorability, and produced considerably more powerful long-term brand effects than rational persuasion ever could.

Conversely, rational messaging was more powerful at generating short-term sales effects once the prospect had 'entered' the funnel and engaged with our nurturing content.

We found emotional metrics were more likely to predict long-term success, whilst rational metrics were more likely to predict short-term success.

To measure, we created a balanced scorecard of metrics capable of monitoring both short and long-term sales and brand effects.

---



Market Background

COBOL applications continue to be at the heart of the world’s business transactions and power the majority of large organisations’ key business operations.

In any IT system, the customers’ business logic and data remain critical to their competitive advantage. The key is unlocking this competitive advantage through exploitation of the latest technology innovations such as ‘big data’ ‘virtualisation’ and ‘cloud’.

Micro Focus helps these companies by enabling them to link their investments in established technology with the latest innovation.

For example, an application written 38 years ago in COBOL – before anyone had thought of Linux, Windows, virtualisation, cloud or wireless communications – can now work today in all of those environments.

Micro Focus’s Visual COBOL software development solution takes traditional COBOL coding into a more productive and efficient Windows development environment. Unlike the archaic ‘green screen’ coding environment which developers currently use, Visual COBOL has a modern, easy-to-use environment.

OBJECTIVES

In 2012, COBOL solutions accounted for 20% of Micro Focus revenues. And there were more than one million licenced users of Micro Focus COBOL.

Most of this came from repeat maintenance fees. So, to grow their market share, Micro Focus needed to convert more COBOL customers to their next generation solution, Visual COBOL.

The challenges faced in marketing were numerous. The new product had very low awareness, so many organisations were blind to the fact that they were doing the ‘old’ when they could be doing the ‘new’.

OBJECTIVES

- Build an immediate sales pipeline with an ROI of 20:1 by growing net-new licence fees
- Create a long-term sustainable brand strategy that would drive ‘brand-led’ searches to lead pipeline
- Guide the audience through the entire buying funnel with emotionally led, memorable and sticky content

TARGET AUDIENCE

We were targeting existing Micro Focus customers using relevant platforms as well as non-IBM mainframe customers.

- Within the organisations we were targeting, the COBOL Developer and their Manager as well as the IT Manager and CTO
- Verticals – Typical COBOL customers within finance, banking, retail, distribution, government and logistics, supply chain
- Geographical targeting – Global

STRATEGY

An audience-focused, content-led approach isn’t new, but it was a new era of innovation for Visual COBOL. We ensured that all our content was remarkable to grab attention and to cut through any negative perceptions of COBOL.

We had to dig deep, and together with the client’s in-house experts we developed five key themes under one emotionally-led ‘Innovation’ umbrella, each theme addressing a specific challenge that COBOL developers, their managers and the organisation face:

1. Increase COBOL Developer Efficiency
2. Tackle the organisational COBOL Skills Challenge
3. Modernise solutions on new IT Architectures
4. Deliver Mobile Services underpinned by existing COBOL investments
5. Deploy applications to Cloud

# EXECUTION

Content alone would not be successful; so, to ensure maximum exposure we used various channels to promote the content, such as paid media, eDMs, DMs, display advertising via our own programmatic advertising trading desk, social media, blogs, PR and events.

We drove our audience to the campaign website and specific landing pages hosting our various assets.

We also encouraged our audience to sign up for a free 30-day trial to test the product. Once someone had taken up the free trial we implemented an automated series of nurture eDMs via Eloqua promoting useful content and offering the reader useful tips and tricks.

At every stage of the marketing funnel, we graded the importance of each piece and gated selected 'hero' assets collecting scored and nurtured leads for the sales team to directly engage.

A win-win strategy emerged during the planning phase to ensure that brand-building activity (a brand platform) was in place to drive sustained long-term volume growth in tandem with short-term activation activity.

## MEDIA, CHANNELS & TECHNIQUES USED

The campaign was delivered globally with the aim to guide our audience through the buyer's funnel from awareness to consideration and conversion.

Starting with the content first, based on our key themes, we mapped our buyer's journey ensuring that we were covering all the bases. Across the buying funnel we implemented a five-point metric system:

### 1. REACH

To reach market saturation with our core message and ensure the right number of individual influencers and business decision makers were exposed to our content, we implemented a broadcast approach including:

- Online display advertising via our advertising trading desk
- Integrated PR
- Launched creative platform

### 2. TARGETING

To ensure our individually profiled prospects were targeted we executed direct marketing campaigns including:

- Direct mail
- Awareness emails promoting various content, driving traffic to the landing pages
- Post-trial we implemented a nurture eDM series via Eloqua and a scoring lead table to qualify leads for Sales

### 3. ENGAGEMENT

To drive engagement, we created an integrated email and campaign microsite, hosted on Eloqua – the marketing automation platform.

The site hosted all our content including:

- Videos
- Interactive tools
- Third party whitepapers
- Product demos
- Step by step guides
- HTML 5 business journey assets



### 4. SOCIALISED

According to our research, a typical buying unit for Micro Focus's Visual COBOL development tools could exceed well over 80 individuals over a 18 month period, so it was critical to produce remarkable content that supported the various buying needs and could be easily shared within the four walls of the buying organisation, as well and across social networks such as LinkedIn, Twitter, industry forums, blogs, etc.

### 5. SALES

The campaign metrics were tracked from front-end funnel to closed sales. COBOL development tools represent over half of Micro Focus's revenue.

Against this our campaign achieved 100% of the annual sales target within the first 6 months.

### Campaign timescales

The campaign was first introduced in February 2013 and is still ongoing.

We initially launched the campaign with the creative platform 'Godfrey diving' video. Then launched five successive product-based waves of activation.

Each lasting 6 months.

1. Increase COBOL Developer Efficiency
2. Tackle the organizational COBOL Skills Challenge
3. Modernize solutions on new IT Architectures
4. Deliver Mobile Services underpinned by existing COBOL investments
5. Deploy applications to Cloud

Each wave included content from top of the funnel to CRM email series.

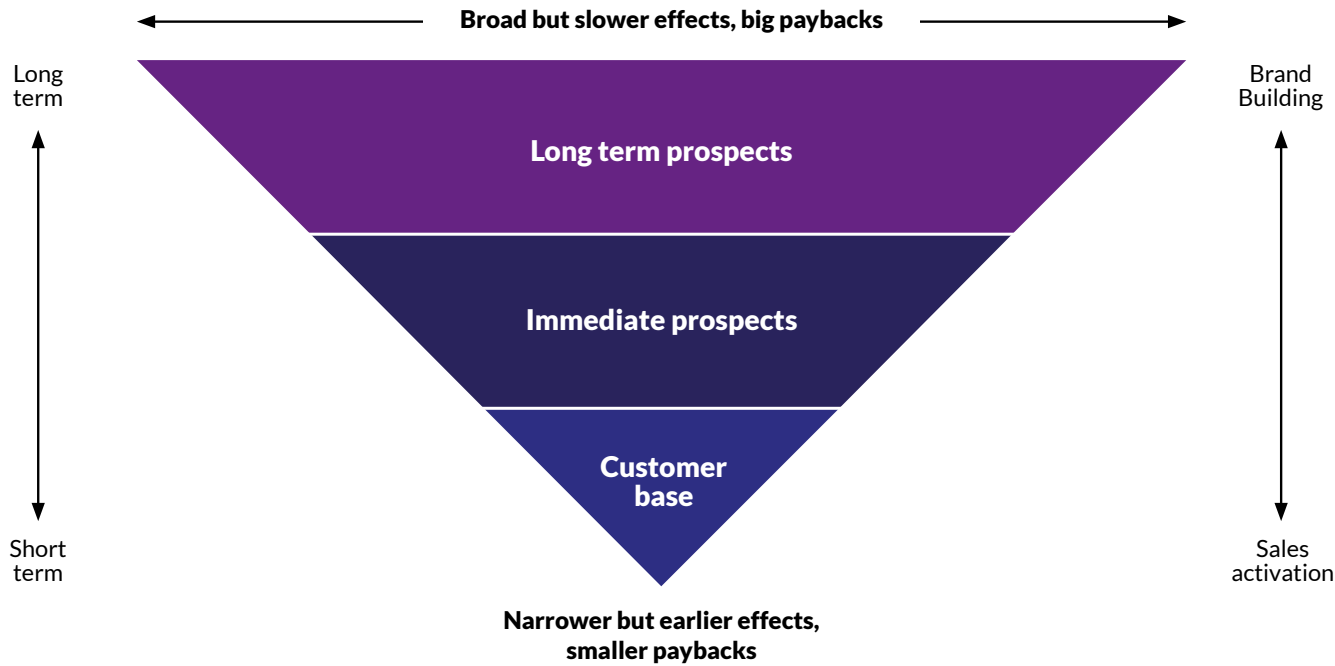


# RESULTS

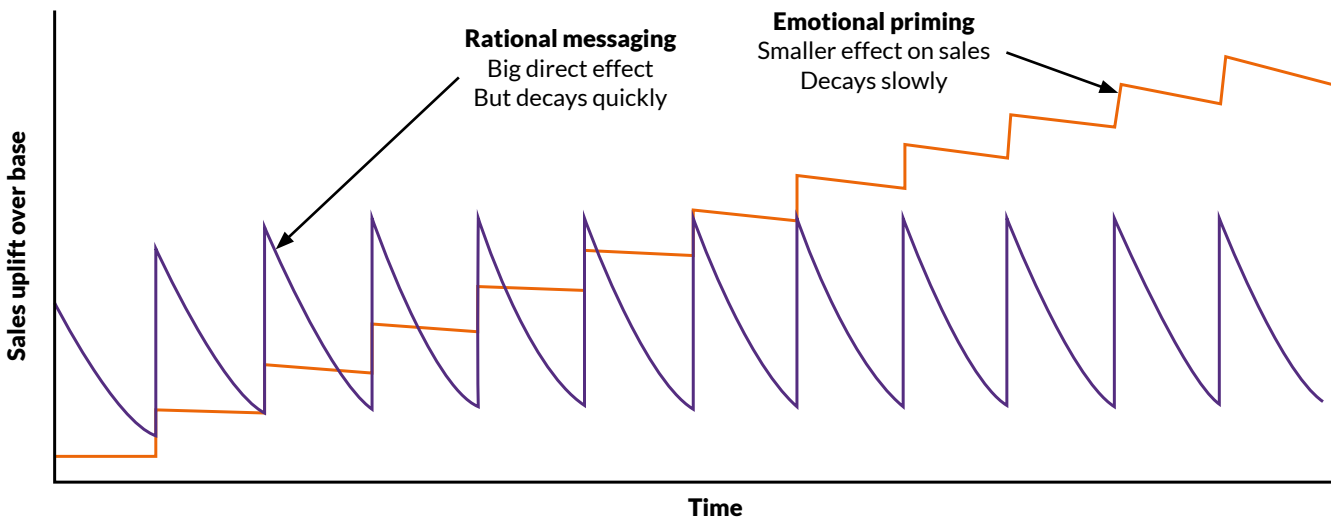
The campaign metrics were tracked from front-end funnel to closed sales.

Since the campaign launched, revenues from Visual COBOL grew strongly, and have ramped up 163% from 2013. ROI for the campaign since its launch has been an amazing 1,083:1.

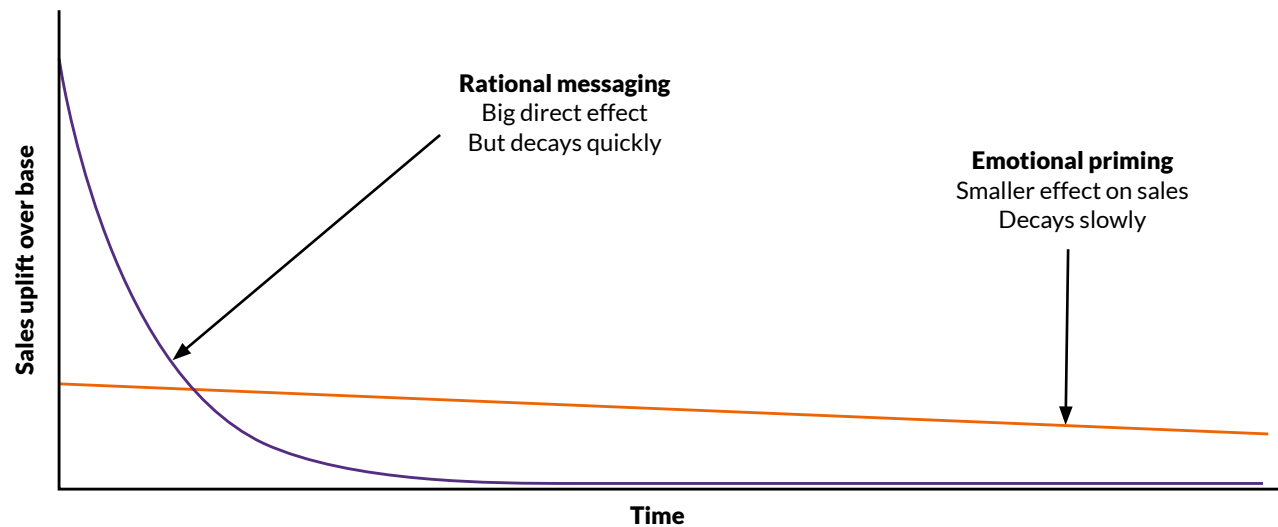
## IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES FROM TOP OF FUNNEL TO CUSTOMER PROSPECTS



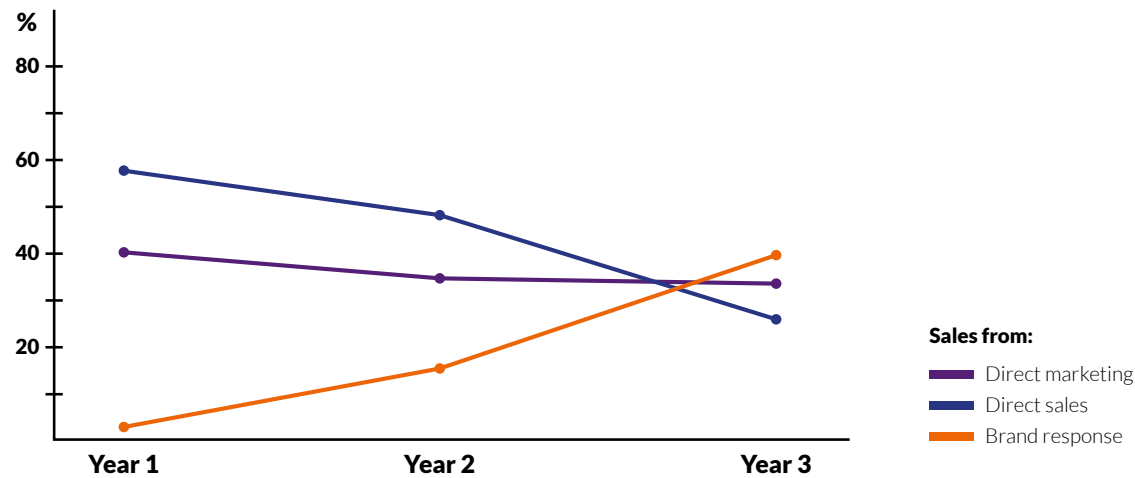
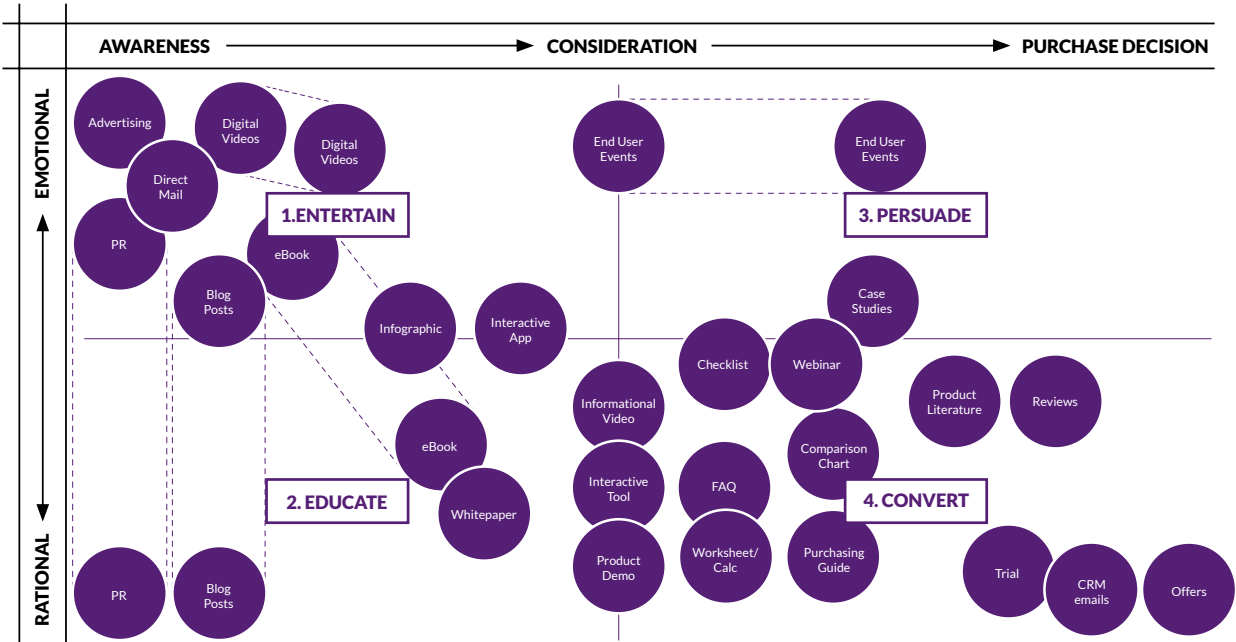
## EFFECT OF MULTIPLE EXPOSURES OF A BRAND PLATFORM



## EFFECT OF A SINGLE EXPOSURE

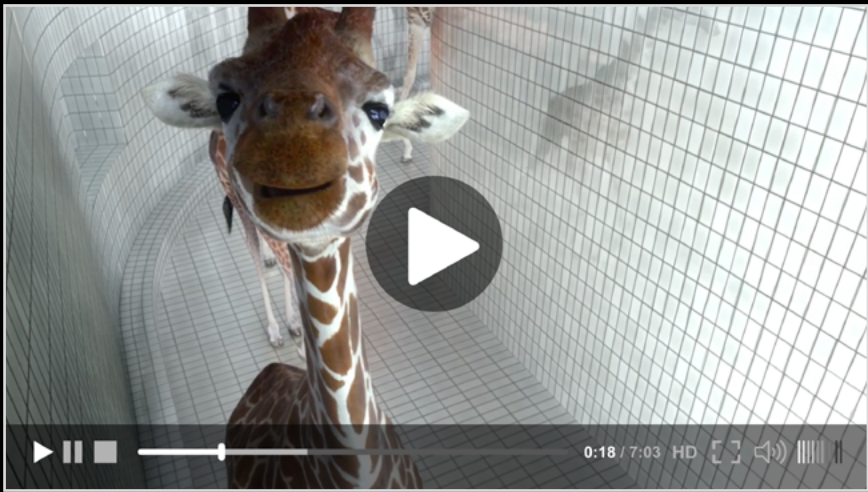


Emotional and rational content across the 'zig zag' funnel from highly memorable and entertaining videos and advertising to rationally driven messaging for sales enablement.



Brand searches now account for over 40% of all sales.  
Overall, sales have increased 163%.

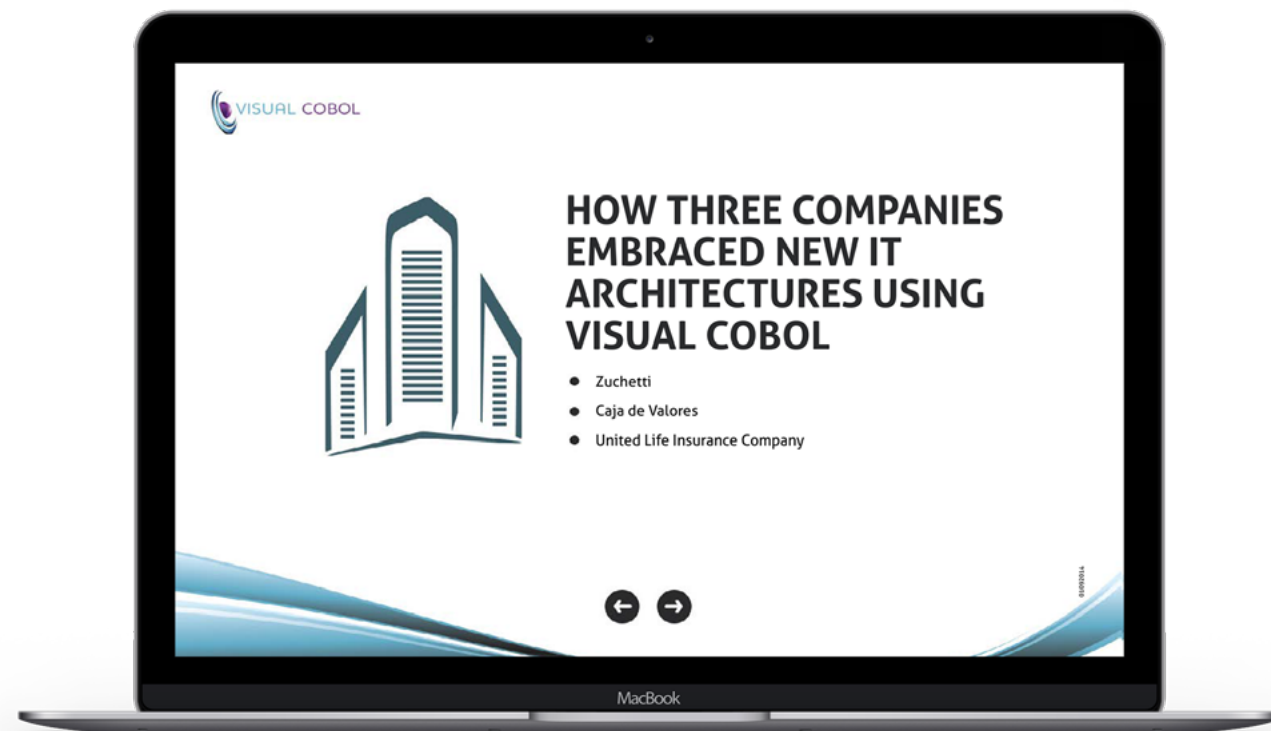
# CREATIVE



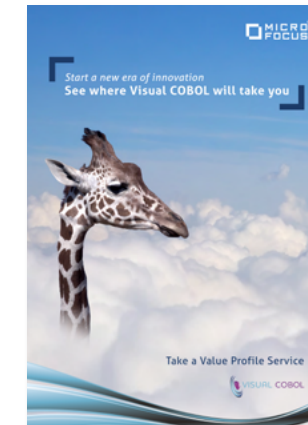
A video was used to kick-off the brand platform  
[trueagency.com/visualcobol2016](http://trueagency.com/visualcobol2016)



Interactive HTML 5 infographic



Low cost direct mail leaflet



Example of sales enablement collateral



12 ways asset PDF

Interactive case study



eNurturing email series promoting 'evergreen' and 'topical' content



Middle of funnel 'rational' sales messages and collateral

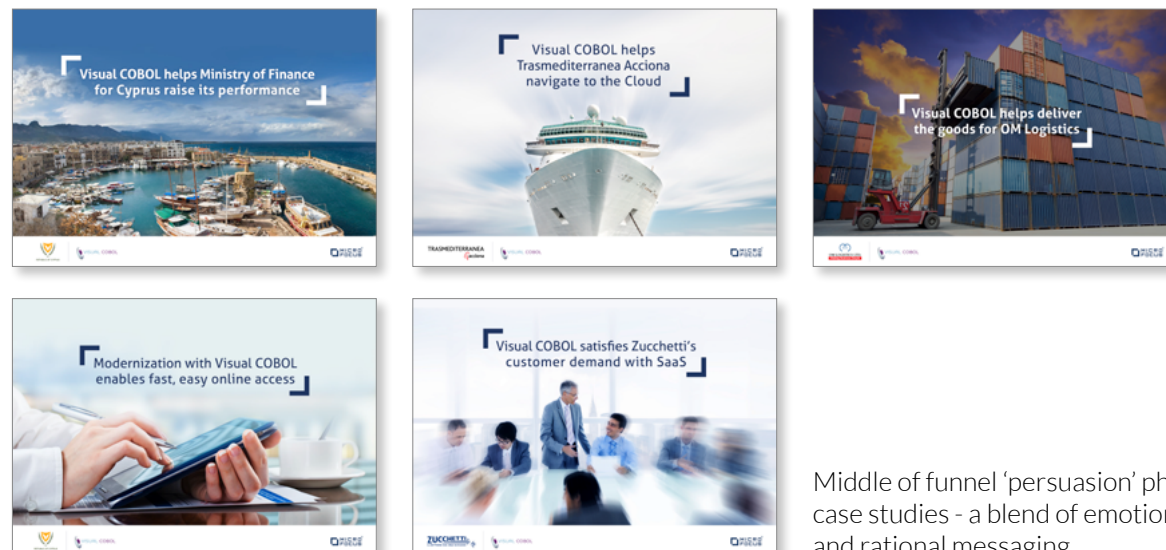




End of funnel 'offers' eNurturing email series



Green screen videos  
[trueagency.com/visualcobol2016](http://trueagency.com/visualcobol2016)



Middle of funnel 'persuasion' phase case studies - a blend of emotional and rational messaging





**true**  
a BBN agency

**Start a great B2B brand story.**

104 Oxford Street

London

W1D 1LP

**T** +44 (0) 207 952 2120

**E** [info@trueagency.com](mailto:info@trueagency.com)

**W** [trueagency.com](http://trueagency.com)

**🐦** [@TrueB2B](https://twitter.com/TrueB2B)